532

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

A MARVEL COMICS EVENT

CIVIL WAR™

STRACZYNSKI

GARNEY

RIGHT NOW....

The War at Home

PART ONE OF SIX

AUNT MAY... MJ...I NEED YOUR HELP. I NEED TO MAKE A DECISION, AND--

--GOD, I JUST...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

BECAUSE DEPENDING ON WHAT WE DO HERE IN THE NEXT FEW HOURS--

--IN A FEW DAYS, THERE MAY NOT *BE* A SPIDER-MAN ANYMORE.

Where do I start?

At the beginning, I guess...

"HOW BAD IS IT, BOSS?"

I DON'T KNOW, PETER. THE LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS IN STAMFORD ARE STILL SORTING THROUGH THE DEBRIS LOOKING FOR SURVIVORS.

DEPENDING ON HOW MANY WERE KILLED, THIS IS BAD...OR IT'S *VERY* BAD.

DO WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?

"IT LOOKS LIKE THERE WAS A FIGHT BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF POWERS. WE'RE STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHO WAS FIGHTING, AND ABOUT WHAT.

"THINGS GOT...OUT OF CONTROL."

WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR WITNESSES WHO CAN TELL US WHO STARTED IT AND WHY, BUT--

BREEP-BREEP

YEAH?

WHAT'VE WE GOT? NO, JUST GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT, I--

OH, GOD...ARE YOU SURE?

BOSS? WHAT--

A SCHOOL, PETER...THEY TOOK OUT A SCHOOL, CROWDED WITH PEOPLE...WITH *KIDS*, AND--

WE'RE LOOKING AT OVER 600 DEAD. MAYBE MORE.

THIS IS BEYOND VERY BAD, PETER. FAR, *FAR* BEYOND...

TWO HOURS LATER...

"IN EVERYONE'S LIFE, PETER, THERE'S AN 'IT'...YOUR WIFE LEAVES YOU, OR YOU GET CANCER. THERE'S YOUR LIFE BEFORE 'IT' AND YOUR LIFE AFTER 'IT.'

"9/11 WAS AN 'IT' OF NATIONAL MAGNITUDE.

"AND STAMFORD... IS GOING TO BE ANOTHER ONE."

"LOOK AT THEM, TONY--"

--THE WAY THEY'RE LOOKING AT US, THE RAGE IN THEIR EYES, IT'S AS IF THEY THINK WE'RE RESPONSIBLE.

AND WHY NOT? NO, WE'RE NOT RESPONSIBLE. BUT WE'RE IN THE SAME FRATERNITY OF POWERS.

WE'RE THE SECOND COUSINS OF THE GUYS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THEIR LOVED ONES.

THEY HATE US.

I DON'T BLAME THEM.

EVEN SO, WE SHOULD GO BACK DOWN THERE--

NO.

THERE COULD BE SURVIVORS--

NO.

WE'VE ALREADY HELPED DIG OUT ALL THE BODIES.

THEN WHAT ARE WE STILL *DOING* HERE IF WE'RE NOT *DOING ANYTHING?*

WE'RE HERE FOR THE SAME REASON HE'S HERE.

WHO?

TRACK THE HELICOPTER WITH JUST YOUR EYES AND LET THE CYBERNETIC SYSTEM ZOOM IN FOR YOU.

I'M NOT SEEING ANY--

OH.

HIS OFFICE CALLED FROM THE WHITE HOUSE AS HE WAS LEAVING. THEY WANTED ME TO BE HERE. THEY WANTED ME TO SEE WHAT HE SAW, AS HE WAS SEEING IT--

THREE HOURS LATER...

"--SO WE COULD TALK ABOUT IT AS SOON AS HE GOT BACK."

TONY--

THIS IS THE WHITE HOUSE, NOT CHURCH, PETER. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WHISPER.

SAYS YOU.

I AM SO OUT OF MY LEAGUE. I'M JUST A KID FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD, TONY. WHAT AM I DOING IN--

--THE WHITE HOUSE.

I THINK I GOTTA PEE.

MR. STARK, THE PRESIDENT WILL SEE YOU NOW.

I'LL JUST BE A FEW MINUTES, PETER. WAIT HERE.

TRY NOT TO TOUCH ANYTHING BREAKABLE.

YESSIR.

UHMM...HI, LISTEN, IS...THERE A RESTROOM ANY-WHERE AROUND HERE I CAN--

DON'T WORRY. YOU CAN RELY ON ME, MR. PRESIDENT.

WHAT HAPPENED?

TONY? WAIT UP--

WHAT DID HE SAY?

TWO THINGS.

FIRST, AS A FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, AND ONE OF THE MOST VISIBLE FIGURES IN OUR LITTLE FRATERNITY, HE WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT CONGRESS WILL MEET LATER TODAY TO PUSH THROUGH THE SUPER-HUMAN REGISTRATION ACT.

IT'LL BE SIGNED WITHIN A WEEK OR SO.

YOU DON'T NEED A RICHTER SCALE TO KNOW THERE'S BEEN A TECTONIC SHIFT IN THE WAY THE COUNTRY SEES US, PETER. YOU CAN ***FEEL*** IT. THE WHOLE COUNTRY JUST SHUDDERED.

THEY WANT THE POWERS ***IDENTIFIED, RESPONSIBLE*** AND ***CONTROLLED***. STARTING IMMEDIATELY.

BUT...YOU'RE GONNA FIGHT THIS, RIGHT?

WE...I MEAN, ALL ***THOSE GUYS*** WHO HAVE OTHER NAMES, ***REAL*** NAMES THEY'VE WORKED SO HARD TO PROTECT...THEY'RE NOT GOING TO JUST ROLL OVER AFTER ALL THAT.

I MEAN... LOOK AT YOUR CASE. IT TOOK YOU ***YEARS*** TO CONVINCE EVERYONE YOU WEREN'T IRON MAN ANYMORE.

I KNOW. WHICH BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND POINT.

HE ASKED ME, STRAIGHT-UP, IF I WAS BACK TO BEING IRON MAN.

AND YOU--

I TOLD HIM YES, PETER.

YOU WHAT?

THE *PRESIDENT* OF THE *UNITED STATES* ASKED ME A QUESTION, PETER.

I TOLD HIM THE TRUTH.

I TOLD HIM I WAS IRON MAN.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE WORST OF IT, PETER. NOT TODAY. NOT BY A LONG SIGHT.

NOT FOR *ME*--

--AND NOT FOR *YOU.*

BUT...I HAD NOTHING TO *DO* WITH WHAT HAPPENED AT STAMFORD.

DOESN'T MATTER.

THE WORLD WHERE THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE JUST ENDED. THE RULES HAVE CHANGED, AND ONCE THE PRESIDENT SIGNS THAT ACT, THOSE RULES BECOME *LAW.*

HERE'S HOW IT'S GOING TO WORK FROM THIS DAY ON, PETER:

"EVERYBODY--*EVERYBODY*--IN A MASK IS GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE IT OFF, REVEAL HIMSELF, AND REGISTER WITH THE GOVERNMENT."

"GOOD GUYS *AND* BAD GUYS?"

"YOU STILL DON'T GET IT, PETER--

"--RIGHT NOW, IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT, FOR AS LONG AS WE REMAIN ANONYMOUS--

"--WE'RE *ALL* BAD GUYS.

"THOSE WHO REFUSE TO COMPLY WILL BE HUNTED DOWN AND ARRESTED... ALONG WITH ANYONE WHO AIDED OR ABETTED THEM IN KEEPING THEIR IDENTITIES SECRET.

"THEIR ASSETS WILL BE FROZEN, THEIR HOMES SEIZED.

"AND FINALLY, THEY WILL BE JAILED. IMPRISONED.

"SOME, POTENTIALLY, FOR A VERY, VERY LONG TIME."

THIS IS GOING TO SPLIT THE POWERED COMMUNITY RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE, PETER. AND I HAVE TO KNOW WHERE YOU STAND.

I STAND WITH YOU, TONY. I TOLD YOU THAT. I MADE A PROMISE. I DON'T DO THAT SORT OF THING LIGHTLY.

I KNOW.

PETER, I *HAVE* TO TAKE THE LEAD IN MAKING THE OTHER POWERS REGISTER. IF I DON'T, SOMEONE ELSE WORSE WILL. AND FRANKLY... I THINK IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO AT THIS POINT.

I WANT YOU AT MY SIDE, PETER. BUT I NEED YOU AS BOTH PETER...AND SPIDER-MAN.

OPENLY.

BOSS...?

TONY...?

WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?*

I'M SAYING THAT, BECAUSE OF MY POSITION, I HAVE TO MAKE SURE EVERY-THING IS ON THE UP-AND-UP. THAT MEANS THAT THE ONLY WAY THAT PETER PARKER CAN WORK WITH ME--

--IS IF SPIDER-MAN UNMASKS.

I CAN'T...DON'T ASK THAT OF ME. ANYTHING ELSE, BUT NOT THAT.

IT'S NOT ME ASKING, PETER. IF YOU ***DON'T*** UNMASK, YOU'LL BE JUST LIKE THE OTHER POWERS WHO DEFY THE LAW.

WANTED CRIMINALS. HUNTED. JAILED. NOT JUST YOU, BUT MJ AND YOUR AUNT, BECAUSE THEY'D BE CONSIDERED ACCOMPLICES.

IF YOU TURN AGAINST THE LAW, I CAN'T HAVE YOU WITH ME. I WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOU...OR YOUR FAMILY.

GOD... GOD, GOD, GOD...

WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN EVERYONE HAS HAD TO MAKE SACRIFICES OF THEIR PRIVACY.

WIRETAPS. INCREASED SURVEILLANCE. RANDOM SEARCHES AT AIRPORTS.

DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULD BE IMMUNE TO THAT FOR LONG? AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN STAMFORD?

I'VE TOLD THE FLIGHT CREW TO TAKE YOU BACK TO NEW YORK.

YOU'RE NOT COMING?

I CAN'T. I HAVE ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT AFTER HE SIGNS THE REGISTRATION ACT.

PETER, I'M STANDING BEHIND REGISTRATION.

I KNOW THIS IS A BIG STEP FOR YOU. MY PILOT HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO PICK YOU UP IF YOU WANT TO STAND BY ME.

IF NOT... NOT.

"GOODBYE, PETER."

RIGHT, YES, I...YES, I KNOW IT'S LATE AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO CLOSE, BUT COULD YOU GIVE ME THE TOTAL AMOUNT IN MY ACCOUNTS?

NO, NOT THE SHARED ACCOUNTS WITH MY WIFE, JUST MINE. RIGHT, SAVINGS, CHECKING, EVERYTHING.

UH-HUH... AND THAT CAN BE WITHDRAWN ANY TIME I WANT.

MINUS TWO THOUSAND IN THE IRA, RIGHT.

THANKS.

$11,273.47

"AUNT MAY...MJ...I NEED YOUR HELP. I NEED TO MAKE A DECISION, AND--

"--GOD, I JUST... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO."

RIGHT NOW...

BECAUSE, DEPENDING ON WHAT WE DO HERE IN THE NEXT FEW HOURS--

--IN A FEW DAYS, THERE MAY NOT BE A SPIDER-MAN ANYMORE.

THE MOMENT I PUT ON THAT MASK AND WALK OUT THE DOOR...I BECOME A CRIMINAL.

YOU'RE *NOT* A CRIMINAL, PETER. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT IF THEY MOVED THE GOALPOSTS. IN YOUR HEART--

MY HEART ISN'T THE ISSUE, MJ. IT'S THE LAW, AND THE LAW HAS A TENDENCY NOT TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE HEART.

OKAY, THEN LET'S LOOK AT OUR OPTIONS. IF YOU GO ALONG WITH THIS...IF YOU GO PUBLIC...DOES THAT REALLY SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

IS TONY GOING TO EXPECT YOU TO HELP HUNT DOWN WHOEVER DOESN'T COME OUT OF THE CLOSET?

PROBABLY.

ARE THEY GOING TO EXPECT YOU TO NAME NAMES?

YOU MEAN, LIKE BACK IN THE 50S? *"ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN...?"*

I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE. EXCEPT I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY THAT TONY DOESN'T KNOW.

WHICH RAISES ANOTHER QUESTION.

IF YOU *DON'T* GO PUBLIC... WILL HE TURN YOU IN? IF HE'S ASKED...WILL HE NAME *YOUR* NAME?

I DON'T KNOW, MJ. I DON'T *THINK* SO...I *THINK* HE WOULD RESPECT ME TOO MUCH FOR THAT, BUT--

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW.

NO... I DON'T KNOW.

GOD, I HATE THIS...I FEEL LIKE THE WALLS ARE PRESSING IN ALL AROUND ME. ALL MY LIFE, I'VE BEEN SO CAREFUL TO HIDE THIS. JUST THE IDEA OF TAKING OFF THE MASK IN PUBLIC--

--MAKES ME FEEL LIKE SOMEONE JUST PUNCHED ME IN THE GUT.

I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET, PETER, BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DECIDE.

IT'S NOT JUST MY DECISION, MJ...WE *ALL* HAVE TO AGREE, BECAUSE THIS AFFECTS YOU TOO. *BOTH* OF YOU.

IF I *DON'T* COME OUT, I'LL HAVE TO GO ON THE RUN.

WE'LL GO WITH YOU.

NO...YOU CAN'T. THE MOMENT YOU DO, THEY CAN ARREST *YOU* AS WELL FOR AIDING AND ABETTING.

IF I GO, I GO ALONE...NO HELP, NO CONTACT, NO MONEY OTHER THAN MY OWN--

CAN I--

--CAN I SAY SOMETHING?

OF COURSE, AUNT MAY. I MEAN, I THINK WE KNOW WHERE YOU STAND, BUT--

NO, I RATHER SUSPECT YOU DON'T, PETER.

WHEN I FOUND OUT YOU WERE SPIDER-MAN, ONCE I GOT OVER THE SHOCK, DO YOU KNOW WHAT MY FIRST EMOTION WAS?

ANGER.

I KNOW...YOU WERE DISAPPOINTED AT ME FOR LYING TO YOU ALL THOSE YEARS, AND--

NO, PETER. I WASN'T ANGRY AT *YOU*.

I WAS MAD AT THE ***WORLD***. BECAUSE PARTS OF THAT WORLD CALLED SPIDER-MAN A MONSTER. A CRIMINAL, EVEN BEFORE THIS NEW LAW. AND IF I KNOW ***ANY***-THING ABOUT MY NEPHEW--

--IT'S THAT HE IS ***NOT*** A CRIMINAL.

THERE ARE ***HUNDREDS*** OF PEOPLE ALIVE RIGHT NOW BECAUSE *YOU* WERE THERE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

YOU HAVE ***NOTHING*** TO BE ASHAMED OF. AND ***MUCH*** TO BE PROUD OF.

I'M ***PROUD*** OF YOU, PETER. AND NOW, MAYBE, IT'S TIME FOR THE WHOLE ***WORLD*** TO BE PROUD OF YOU. TO ***KNOW*** YOU, AS I KNOW YOU.

I KNOW YOU ARE, AUNT MAY, BUT I HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ***PROTECT*** YOU. I MADE A ***PROMISE***--

YES, YOU DID.

AT SIXTEEN.

A CHILD'S PROMISE THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HOW THE WORLD ***WORKS***.

EVERY DAY, PROSECUTORS AND JUDGES AND GOVERNORS AND SENATORS GO TO WORK, KNOWING THEIR LOVED ONES MAY BE JEOPARDIZED BY THEIR WORK.

BUT ***THEY*** DON'T WEAR MASKS TO WORK.

DO YOU KNOW ***WHY?***

I DON'T KNOW, AUNT MAY...WHY?

BECAUSE THEIR LOVED ONES *WANT* IT THAT WAY.

BECAUSE THEY WOULD RATHER DIE THAN SEE THE FACE THEY LOVE, THE FACE THAT GIVES SO MUCH TO THE WORLD, COVERED IN SHAME.

SOME THINGS ARE WORTH THE RISK, PETER.

YOU'RE ONE OF THEM.

MJ...DO SOMETHING...TALK SOME SENSE INTO HER.

PETER--

SHE'LL LISTEN TO YOU, I KNOW IT, I--

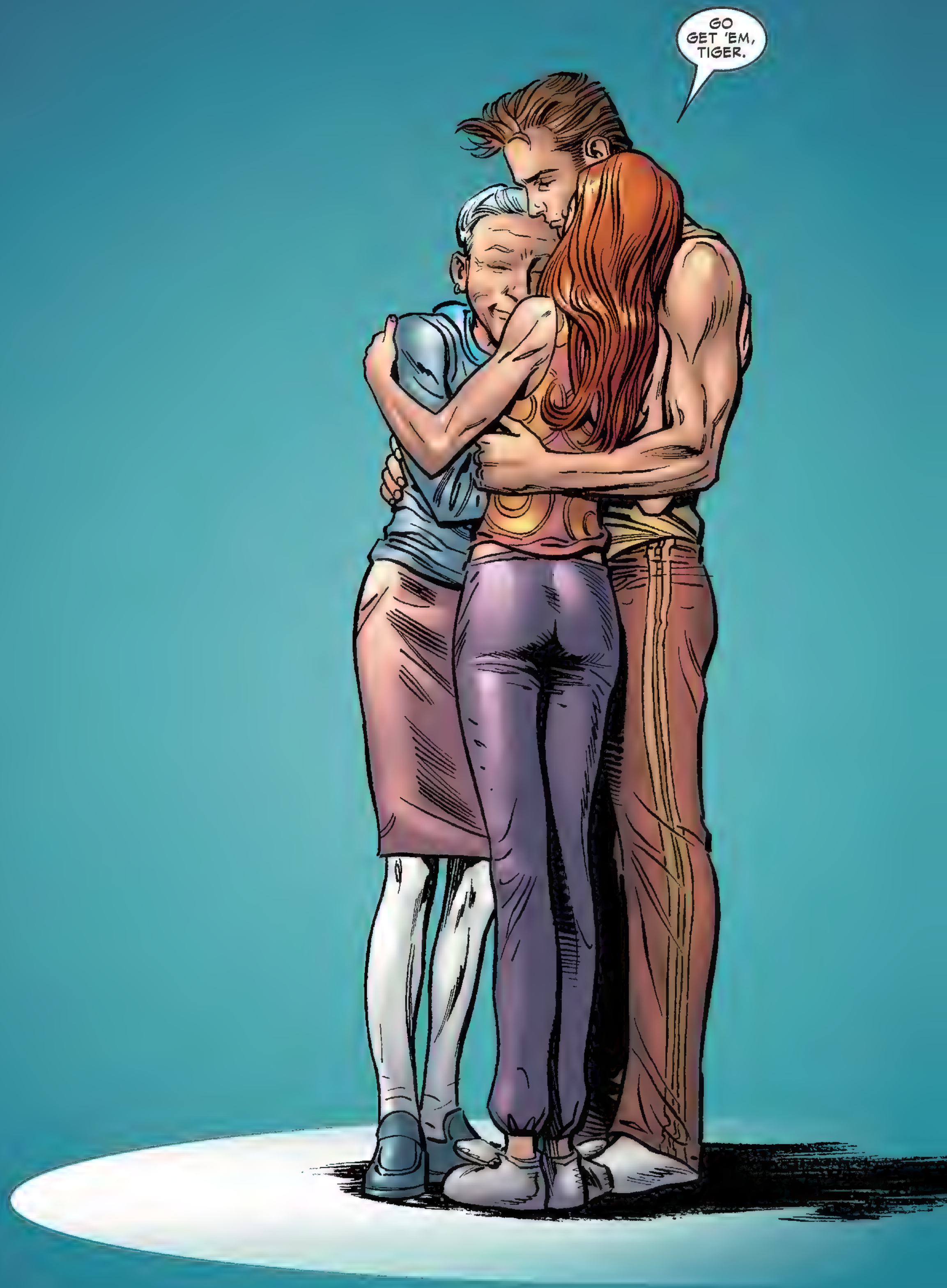
SHE'S RIGHT.

DON'T RUN.

STAND YOUR GROUND.

LET THE WHOLE *WORLD* UNDERSTAND WHY WE LOVE YOU--

--MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF.


GO GET 'EM, TIGER.

FOUR DAYS LATER...

I used to wonder which would be harder...having no one to believe in you--

--or someone who believes in you so much that their love could burn you to the ground. Someone who knows you can give more than you think you can.

Not just love. Ferocity.

I think I finally figured that one out. But this one--

Just over one hour until the plane leaves.

I can't do it. I can't.

I've spent so many years hiding this...I just can't do it.

I'll swing by the bank, cash in my accounts...come up with a fake name...head north, to New England or Canada.

Once things calm down, I can come back, or send for MJ and May.

That's it, then. It had to be unanimous, and I vote not to--

PETER?

I KNOW YOU HAVE THAT NICE NEW SUIT TONY MADE FOR YOU, BUT I STITCHED THIS UP FOR YOU DURING THE NIGHT.

THIS WAY THEY'LL KNOW FOR SURE IT'S YOU WHEN THEY SEE YOU.

BEN, AND THEN YOU, ALWAYS SAID, "WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."

AND RESPONSIBILITY MEANS YOU DON'T RUN AWAY WHEN SOMEONE ASKS, "WHO DID THAT?"

NEXT MORNING...

FIVE MINUTES TO AIR, MR. STARK.

THANK YOU.

ANY MESSAGES FOR ME?

NO, SIR. I'M AFRAID NOT.

YOU TOOK US IN WHEN WE HAD NOWHERE TO GO.

YOU'VE BEEN GOOD TO MJ, AND TO AUNT MAY. YOU STOOD BY US. YOU'VE BEEN LIKE--

--LIKE A FATHER TO ME.

I MADE A PROMISE THAT I WOULD STAND BY YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.

I KEEP MY PROMISES, TONY.

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO. I'LL BACK YOU UP. ALL THE WAY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'M SURE I DON'T HAVE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ONE OF THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THE PRO-REGISTRATION MOVEMENT, MRS. MIRIAM SHARPE.

"MRS. SHARPE, AS YOU MAY RECALL, LOST HER SON IN THE STAMFORD INCIDENT AND KICK-STARTED MY PASSION FOR THE FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF *ALL SUPER HEROES.*

"LIKEWISE, I'M PRETTY SURE *SPIDER-MAN* NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION."

HI. GOOD MORNING.

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

I'M STANDING HERE TODAY BECAUSE--

--WELL, BECAUSE--

--I HAVE AN *ANNOUNCEMENT* TO MAKE.

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